

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: *

*

ALEUTIAN FALCON FIRE *

IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON, *

Accident No.: DCA21FM016

ON FEBRUARY 18, 2021 *

*

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Interview of: JOHN HOBBS, Vessel Safety Manager
Trident Seafoods

Via Microsoft Teams

Thursday,
December 2, 2021

APPEARANCES:

MICHAEL KUCHARSKI, Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

████████████████████ Chief Warrant Officer
United States Coast Guard

LARRY ALTENBRUN, Attorney
Nicoll, Black, and Feig

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I N T E R V I E W

(1:50 p.m. EST)

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2
3 MR. KUCHARSKI: So, today is the 2nd of December 2021, and
4 we're here to conduct an interview which relates to the
5 investigation of the fire aboard the *Aleutian Falcon*, which
6 occurred on the 17th of February 2021. And this interview is
7 being taken over Microsoft Teams and the interviewees are -- and
8 this interviewee is at the Tacoma facility of Trident Seafoods.
9 And let me go around your room now and please identify yourselves?

10 MR. HOBBS: John Hobbs, vessel safety manager in Tacoma.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Would you spell your name, too, gents?

12 MR. HOBBS: J-o-h-n H-o-b-b-s.

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Thank you.

14 MR. ALTENBRUN: My name is Larry Altenbrun; the last name is
15 spelled A-l-t-e-n-b-r-u-n. I am an attorney at Nicoll Black and
16 Feig, Nicoll, N-i-c-o-l-l, Black like the color, Feig, F-e-i-g.
17 This is a law firm based in Seattle, Washington. I am the
18 attorney for Trident Seafoods.

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay.

20 CWO [REDACTED] Chief Warrant Officer [REDACTED] [REDACTED] Last name is
21 spelled [REDACTED]. I'm with the U.S. Coast Guard.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, great. Thank you, gentlemen.

23 And Mr. Hobbs, is it okay if I record this interview?

24 MR. HOBBS: Yes.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: All right, then the time is approximately

1 1350, Eastern Standard Time, which makes it about 10:50, Pacific
2 Standard Time.

3 INTERVIEW OF JOHN HOBBS

4 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

5 Q. So, Mr. Hobbs, would you give us a little bit of your
6 background, you know, schooling in general, schooling related to
7 maritime industry?

8 A. My background is 12 years with Trident Seafoods, no maritime
9 schooling. I went to Walla Walla Community College for criminal
10 justice, transferred to WSU, and then stopped.

11 Q. Okay, and you mentioned marine related employment,
12 was -- you've been at Trident for 12 years, is that correct?

13 A. Yeah, give or take.

14 Q. And did you go right to Trident from WSU -- is that
15 Washington State University?

16 (Audio glitch)

17 A. -- chain of events. I went from WSU into (indiscernible) and
18 dining and then that was -- I believe three years after WSU is
19 when I started with Trident.

20 Q. Okay, so the only marine-related employment was with Trident,
21 is that correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay, so you don't hold any Coast Guard license, is that
24 correct?

25 A. No.

1 Q. Are there any other credentials that you hold -- that you
2 have that are necessary for your job?

3 A. I have SCP training through Sound Testing, every year we do
4 HAZWOPER courses. I've done that for 12 years and I'd have to look
5 through my folder for all the other classes that we've done
6 through Trident Seafoods.

7 Q. Okay, and so the SCP, that's a shipyard competent person, is
8 that what that stands for, SCP?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay, because you know what -- sorry, I have to ask you these
11 because the court reporter -- the person that transcribes this
12 interview is not going to know what SCP is, you know, sometimes
13 they don't hear it and then -- or can't tell what it is. And the
14 HAZWOPER, that's h-a-z-w-o-p-e-r, that's hazardous material
15 related training, is that correct?

16 A. Yeah, hazardous material training.

17 Q. Okay, great. And you mentioned that your current employer is
18 Trident Seafood, is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And your current position, did you mention that was as the
21 vessel maintenance facility safety manager, is that correct?

22 A. It's titled as vessel safety manager.

23 Q. Vessel safety manager, okay. And how long have you been as
24 vessel safety manager at Trident?

25 A. Since September 2020.

1 Q. Okay, and what positions did you hold at Trident before that?

2 A. When I first started with Trident, I was dock worker and
3 welder, and then I moved up to dock foreman for our Naknek, Alaska
4 plant in Bristol Bay.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. And then from foreman, went to vessel safety.

7 Q. Okay, and when you say vessel safety -- so, that was as
8 vessel safety manager, is that correct?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. Right, okay, and so I've pulled up this org chart that you
11 see before us. Where do you fit -- do you fit in anywhere in this
12 org chart -- organization chart? The chart is -- and it's called
13 org chart and at the top it has the Tacoma yard operations
14 manager, Larry Duncan.

15 CWO [REDACTED] Mike, just so you know, I have a copy of the org
16 chart that I just passed him.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay.

18 CWO [REDACTED] So, he can --

19 MR. KUCHARSKI: Sure, and who was that that was just
20 speaking?

21 CWO [REDACTED] This was [REDACTED] [REDACTED] with the Coast Guard.

22 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, thank you.

23 (Background conversation)

24 MR. ALTENBRUN: If you don't know, you can simply say you
25 don't know.

1 MR. HOBBS: I don't know.

2 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

3 Q. Okay, so then let me ask you, I'm just trying to see where
4 safety fits into the overall organization. Do you -- who do you
5 report to -- who's the next person up the line that you report to?

6 A. Well, I answer to Martin Teachout and I would work probably
7 closest with Larry Duncan and JB Hallam. I talk to the facility
8 manager on things that I want to upgrade and things that I want to
9 do.

10 Q. Okay, and I see on the org chart Larry Duncan is the
11 operations manager, JB Hallam is the Tacoma assistant operations
12 manager? Okay, I see that.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Yeah, that -- there's -- I'll use my pointer here too where
15 you can see that -- yeah, I see the two names there. Okay. But
16 Martin Teachout is not in this organizational chart that I can
17 see. Do -- is there a -- do you know if there's a separate
18 operation up in Seattle that Trident has?

19 A. We've got a corporate office, yes.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. And a -- yeah.

22 Q. Okay, and maybe that's where -- well, I don't know where
23 maybe safety fits in in the overall picture, but that's okay. So,
24 Martin Teachout is your direct report. So, let -- I like to
25 now -- for you to look at your actual job description and I

1 apologize, I got this yesterday, but I think for the purpose of
2 this interview it'll work fairly well. And I don't know if
3 Mr. [REDACTED] has a copy for you there, but you see it on the screen,
4 it says vessel maintenance facility safety manager. That's what
5 this actually says. I can blow it up if you want -- I can make it
6 larger?

7 CWO [REDACTED] I got it here, Mike.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay.

9 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

10 Q. Is this your actual job description, do you know?

11 (Audio glitch)

12 CWO [REDACTED] Are you there, Mike?

13 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yep, I'm here.

14 CWO [REDACTED] Okay, he answered yes to your last question.

15 MR. KUCHARSKI: Oh, okay. Yeah, it faded out for a minute.

16 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

17 Q. Okay. All right, the -- so, let me just skim down here to
18 make it a little bit easier, I've got it highlighted. Number
19 eight, it says reviews and monitors the competent person
20 procedures, policies, and practices in assistance and guidance to
21 the facility's SCP's as needed. So, are there a group of SCP's
22 that report to you, how does that work?

23 A. We have all of our engineers have gone through SCP training
24 and I -- but all of our leads through SCP training, and then
25 there's another welder that is an SCP who assists me.

1 Q. Okay, so as the manager, then, all the SCP's would interface
2 with you as far as the SCP procedures go, would that be a fair
3 statement?

4 A. Yes, we all communicate with each other.

5 Q. Okay, and the walk-through inspections that you make -- down
6 in here it talks about walk-through inspections on number 11,
7 conducts ship and yard daily walk-through inspections and audits
8 to ensure compliance. Are any of these walkthroughs -- are they
9 considered SCP's -- inspection by an SCP?

10 A. Yeah, when I walk through the boats, I'm looking for SCP
11 stuff and safety.

12 Q. Okay, but this -- you know, I was just scanning through some
13 of the OSHA requirements under the SCP duties and, you know, I'm
14 just trying to figure out if you do walk through it is, you know,
15 on a hot work certificate, for instance, or testing? SCP's are
16 supposed to perform that, would you agree with that statement?
17 Was that -- sorry, you're freezing up now.

18 (Audio glitch)

19 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

20 Q. That we looked at your job description -- I'm going to pull
21 that up and just briefly get back into that mode and give me one
22 second and then we will be up and rolling again. Are you hearing
23 me okay and seeing me okay now? Yes? Are you hearing me okay,
24 Mr. Hobbs?

25 A. (Indiscernible).

1 Q. Can you hear me right now?

2 MR. ALTENBRUN: We can't hear you right now. You're breaking
3 up too much for us to be able to hear you well enough to do an
4 interview.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, so what I will do then --

6 CWO [REDACTED] You're breaking up, Mike.

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: I don't think -- it's probably -- it must be
8 something internally with what is coming through. So, let me hand
9 up and what we'll do is we'll continue the interview by phone only
10 and Mr. [REDACTED] has the --

11 MR. ALTENBRUN: -- not well enough.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. All right.

13 (Off the record)

14 (On the record)

15 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, is this a better connection for you?

16 MR. ALTENBRUN: For now, yes.

17 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Well, yeah, I'm surprised the mobile
18 hotspot is down. You're right, for now, I'll grant you that.

19 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

20 Q. Okay, so I think where we left off was that we were talking
21 about the shipyard competent persons and that essentially looking
22 at -- I asked you about responsibilities, and if you went aboard
23 vessels as a shipyard competent person -- acting as a shipyard
24 competent person, and do you go on board as a shipyard competent
25 person?

1 A. Yes, I do go on board as a shipyard competent person.

2 Q. Okay, perfect. And so, the -- so, I understand how things
3 work the Tacoma facility, where you work, where the fire occurred
4 on the *Aleutian Falcon* is considered a shipyard under the OSHA
5 regs, would that be correct?

6 A. I'm not sure. I'd have to double check.

7 Q. Okay, the -- so, you don't know -- even though you're a
8 shipyard competent person, you don't know if the particular
9 facility there is considered a shipyard, then?

10 A. We go off of the shipyard rules, yes.

11 Q. Oh, okay. Like I said, I'm not trying to trick, I just need
12 to see how the pieces fit -- everything fits together if you will.
13 So, can you describe to us on a day-to-day basis what your job
14 entails?

15 A. Yeah, so in the morning when I get here, I bump our gas
16 meters and make sure that they are working properly, and then I
17 start going aboard the vessels, verifying that we have fire
18 extinguishers, are fire hoses in the right spots, our
19 watches -- making sure that we are set up to perform our work and
20 I do that for all of the vessels. I will climb into confined
21 spaces -- the gas meter before people enter to verify that it is
22 safe for entry. And when I get done with the vessels, I then go
23 throughout the facility to check on things.

24 Q. Okay, and when -- this is Mike Kucharski -- when you say the
25 facility -- so, does your job also encompass -- besides ships and

1 the boats that are there -- the vessels that are there, does it
2 also encompass checking things in the shoreside facilities?

3 A. Just in our yard here. It's a warehouse and a welding shop.

4 Q. Okay, and when you say just in our yard, are you talking
5 about Trident's yard there in Tacoma?

6 A. Yes, just here in our -- the Tacoma yard.

7 Q. Okay, great. So, do you interface with the person overall
8 responsible for the work being performed on a job site?

9 A. Yes, I communicate with the engineers and then I also
10 communicate with the lead -- or supervisor on the vessel -- I meet
11 with him in the morning and see where -- how the work is going,
12 where it's happening at.

13 Q. Okay, and when you say the engineer, are we talking about the
14 port engineer?

15 A. Yes, the port engineers.

16 Q. Okay, great, and your interface with the port engineer, is
17 that limited just to hot work?

18 A. No, I interface with him every morning and everything that's
19 kind of brought on, I like to have a scope of all the work that's
20 being performed, the mechanicing (sic), engine replacement,
21 whatever.

22 Q. Okay, and this -- the interface with -- let me go back to the
23 hot work on a particular day, do you interface with other
24 personnel? So, you mentioned the leads, are there any other
25 people that you interface with on the vessel before the hot work

1 commences?

2 A. The lead welder on the boat, the port engineer, I interface
3 with the fire watches, I talk to them, I interface with our lead
4 welder because I have to be in communication with all the moving
5 parts.

6 (Audio glitch)

7 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay -- are you fucking kidding me? We'll
8 resume take four I guess this is now.

9 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

10 Q. So, Mr. Hobbs, the -- I asked you about interfacing with
11 other people and you mentioned the lead welder, the port engineer,
12 fire watches. Could you tell me what the difference is between a
13 welder and a lead welder?

14 A. Lead welder is basically the supervisor of the boat. He's in
15 charge of the welders and he will report to the port engineer.
16 We've got to have a supervisor on the boat.

17 Q. Okay, and is that leader -- lead welder -- or the lead person
18 on there always a lead welder, or can it be a different lead?

19 A. We've had the same leads since I got here. There will always
20 be (indiscernible) to do things.

21 Q. Okay, so the lead would be the same thing as the lead welder,
22 would that be a fair assessment?

23 A. Yes, the lead and the lead welder, they're the same.

24 Q. Okay, great, thank you. That really helped. When I see the
25 term used interchangeable and I just want to make sure I'm talking

1 about the same thing. So, you're familiar also with the term fire
2 watch or fire watchman, is that correct?

3 A. Yes, I'm familiar with that.

4 Q. And do you also -- when you go on board in the morning, do
5 you also interface with the fire watches?

6 A. Yes, I talk to all of the fire watches, I make sure that
7 they're there and that there's stuff with them, fire extinguisher,
8 fire hose.

9 Q. Great, and do you also tell them what to do?

10 A. Yes, I do all the training for them. If they're not doing
11 something they're supposed to be doing, I will correct them. But
12 the lead is in charge of placing them, moving them around.

13 Q. Okay, that's -- okay, I'm seeing a little bit better, so the
14 lead positions them, tells them where to do. But how about, like,
15 you know, putting fire blankets, or any of the flame retardants,
16 or anything like that, or wetting things down, do you tell them
17 what to do, or does the lead person tell them what to do?

18 A. The lead will tell them what to do.

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I make sure that they're doing it.

21 Q. Okay, great, and do you know if there are different types of
22 fire blankets that are used at the Tacoma facility?

23 A. Yes, there is.

24 Q. There are different types, is that correct?

25 A. Yes, there are.

1 Q. Yeah, and can you tell me what the different types are?

2 A. Well, the one is a heavy, fiberglass, woven mat that we can
3 we down. The other is -- I don't know the makeup of it, but it's
4 an orange fire blanket that protects and shields things and
5 sparks.

6 Q. And do they have different fire-retardant properties?

7 A. I would have to look that up. I don't have that information
8 with me.

9 Q. Okay, are you familiar with the term fire and ice?

10 A. Yes, I am.

11 Q. Okay, and can you tell me briefly what that is and what it's
12 used for?

13 A. It is used for -- you spray it on where you are welding and
14 it basically eliminates the heat from (indiscernible) where the
15 person (indiscernible) they held the piece of metal and ran a
16 cutting torch across the corner of it and it now transfers heat to
17 their finger.

18 Q. So, the fire and ice is used to help prevent heat transfer,
19 is that correct?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay, and can you -- in general terms, can you tell us how
22 you prepare an area for hot work?

23 A. What kind of area are we talking about, for foam?

24 Q. Well, yeah, an area say on the *Aleutian Falcon* where there is
25 foam involved. But besides surface preparation, you know, I'm

1 talking about blankets and fire and ice, you know, what goes into
2 preparing an area for hot work?

3 A. We've got to have a fire hose, fire extinguisher, fire watch.
4 If we're around foam wherever we're welding, we are to remove the
5 foam 12 inches from where we are welding and we will spray the
6 metal on the existing foam with fire and ice. We will cover
7 machinery or -- and stuff with our fire blankets. We'll drape
8 them from the ceiling to shield other people from getting hit with
9 sparks.

10 Q. And what do you cover with the fire blankets?

11 A. Well, machinery.

12 Q. Just --

13 A. A lot.

14 Q. Sorry, just --

15 A. It's a lot of --

16 Q. I'm sorry, is it just machinery that you cover with the fire
17 blankets?

18 A. Anything we don't want getting affected with sparks and slag.

19 Q. Okay, anything that you don't want sparks or slag to hit, you
20 put a fire blanket on it, is that -- would that be a fair
21 statement?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay, and are you familiar with the term marine chemist?

24 A. Yes, I am.

25 Q. Okay, does Trident have any written policy relating to the

1 relationship between a Trident employee and the marine chemist?

2 A. You mean when we're supposed to contact the marine chemist?

3 Q. Is there anything in writing that Trident gives you any
4 guidelines on, you know -- yeah, contacting or interfacing,
5 working with the marine chemist? Are there any
6 guidelines -- company guidelines for that?

7 A. Yes. I'd have to find it here. Engine rooms, because of the
8 tanks, I'm always contacting the marine chemist.

9 Q. Okay, and so, do you directly interface with the marine
10 chemist?

11 A. Yes, I will interface with the marine chemist.

12 Q. Okay, and do you ever order the marine chemist to perform a
13 survey for hot work?

14 A. No, I leave that interface to the port engineer.

15 Q. Okay, great, and do you ever tell the marine chemist the
16 scope of work to be performed on a certain job?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay, and do you go on board a vessel to inspect it prior to
19 the work commencing for the day?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. You do, okay. So, are you familiar with the term -- let me
22 back up, when you go on board to inspect the vessel prior to work
23 commencing for the day, what do you look for -- what are you
24 looking for?

25 A. Like I mentioned to you earlier, I'm making sure that the

1 fire watch is present, charged fire hose, fire extinguisher. If
2 we're working around foam, I want to make sure all debris is
3 cleaned up -- swept up and the garbage bags are removed from it.
4 I'm looking for mitigating trip hazards, making sure people are
5 wearing proper PPE.

6 Q. And PPE, would that be personal protection equipment?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, and so are you familiar with the term a marine chemist
9 certificate?

10 A. Yes, I am.

11 Q. Okay, great, and where are the marine chemist certificates
12 kept, where do you -- where are they kept?

13 A. While the boat is at port, we keep them on the reader board
14 of the gangway leading up to the boat and then after the boat is
15 gone, I file them away in my file cabinet.

16 Q. Okay, and when the marine chemist fills out this certificate,
17 you say one is put on the reader board at gangway -- the foot of
18 the gangway going on the ship. Is another one given to you or
19 someone shoreside another copy or is it just that one on the
20 reader board that --

21 A. The one on the reader board and then I get the other copy.

22 Q. You get the copy. Okay, and do you look at the marine
23 chemist certificate for the vessel each day when you board to
24 check the vessel?

25 A. I usually am with the marine chemist when he goes on board

1 and sit down with them and he writes it out and then yes, I look
2 at the marine chemist cert.

3 Q. Okay, so your regular practice is when you go on board. So,
4 after the marine chemist issues the certificate say a couple days
5 later, you go on board the vessel, you look at that certificate
6 first to refresh your memory so to speak, and then go on board the
7 vessel? Would that be a fair statement?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. Okay, and are you given a list of repairs or work that will
10 be performed on a vessel for any given day? Are you given a list
11 of the repair items?

12 A. No, that's why I interface with the lead and the engineer.

13 Q. Okay, so does the lead have a list or is there any list that
14 exists for the repair work that's done on a vessel for a
15 particular day?

16 A. I know that they have a list -- technically a notepad that
17 they write down and that's how we account for everybody and where
18 they're at.

19 Q. But as far as you're concerned, you're just told verbally
20 what's going to be done on the vessel for a particular day, is
21 that correct?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Okay, and you're told by either the lead man -- the lead
24 person -- or the lead welder, let's say, and the -- or the port
25 engineer, one of those two will tell you?

1 A. Usually, they both tell me I need reviews first thing in the
2 morning before 6:00 and then I go out and meet with the lead.

3 Q. Okay, so let me make sure I have that right. Usually, it's
4 the port engineer that tells you before you go out to the vessel
5 and then you go out to the vessel and meet with the lead man, is
6 that correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, so if you would now, Mr. [REDACTED] is with you there, would
9 you look at Exhibit 2, which is the marine chemist certificate for
10 the date of 02-04-21?

11 A. He has a copy that he pulled out of his file.

12 Q. Okay, great, and is the one that you pulled out of your file,
13 is it serial number 031558?

14 A. Yes, it is.

15 Q. Okay, great. So, I just wanted to make sure that we're
16 looking at the right one. And the date on that is 02-04-2021, is
17 that correct?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Okay, and I think I already know the answer, but I just want
20 to make sure, the -- at the bottom, left-hand corner of that
21 certificate, it says customer copy and then it says signed and
22 Trident 02-04-2021, is that your signature?

23 A. No, it is not.

24 Q. Okay, great, and so is it your responsibility -- now, I think
25 you've already said the port engineer orders the marine chemist to

1 perform the survey, is that correct?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. Okay, so this particular survey -- I just want to be doubly
4 and triply clear that this survey -- this marine chemist
5 certificate survey that we're talking about, you did not order the
6 marine chemist to actually perform that survey?

7 A. No, I did not order it.

8 Q. Okay, great, and could you tell me if there were any other
9 later -- after 02-04-2021 marine chemist certificates issued for
10 the *Aleutian Falcon*?

11 A. Yes, there was.

12 Q. Okay, and what date is that on that certificate?

13 A. There's the January 22nd, there's the one that we are looking
14 at, 02-04, there is the March 1st, there's a February 28th,
15 February 27th, February 26th, February 25 --

16 Q. Okay, let me hold you there.

17 A. Okay.

18 Q. And I apologize, was there any certificate issued between 02-
19 04 and the date of the fire, 02-17, any other certificate for
20 those -- between those dates?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay, so all the other ones that you're reading off from
23 March 1st and February 27th, February 26th, February 25th and on,
24 those were for after the actual fire occurred?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay, great. So, then this certificate that we're looking at
2 was the one that was current at the time of the fire?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Okay, and so when this certificate -- when the marine chemist
5 came on board to do the survey that's associated with the
6 certificate, were you actually with him when he completed the
7 survey?

8 A. I was not present on this day. I had a new baby, so we were
9 doing the doctor's appointments. But when I returned, I met up
10 with the port engineer and walked through this with him.

11 Q. Okay, and the port engineer that you walked through it with,
12 would that be Dustin Jones?

13 A. Correct.

14 Q. Okay, and you said he -- you discussed the marine chemist
15 certificate with him, can you elaborate and tell us what -- do you
16 remember any specifics of what you discussed?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. I don't know.

20 Q. Okay, yeah, it's -- and I understand, we're talking about ten
21 months ago. It may be fairly difficult. So, tell me, when you
22 have attended with other marine chemists when they do their
23 surveys, do you look at plans or is it just you look at the areas
24 where the work's going to be performed?

25 A. I just look at the area where it's going to be performed.

1 Q. Okay, and the gentleman that was the marine chemist that
2 performed this, it shows up at the top of this form as
3 Joseph Tretivick (ph.). Do you see that at the top?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you -- have you ever worked with Mr. Tretivick before?

6 A. He has come out a couple times with me, yeah.

7 Q. Okay, and how would you describe working with him, is he
8 approachable, reasonable, competent? Can you tell us how you
9 viewed his work?

10 A. Very competent, very smart, and very approachable.

11 MR. KUCHARSKI: Oh, great. I'm going to pause for a second,
12 this is very helpful, all you've given us and thanks for wracking
13 your brain, again, for going back ten months and maybe more. So,
14 what -- this is a nice place to pause before we go into the next
15 phase and just to give you an idea of timewise. So, I've gone
16 through about two-thirds of the questions, so we've moved along
17 really well. You've done -- really been very helpful. My next
18 phase will be actually to ask you to walk us through your routine
19 for that day, okay.

20 So, do we want to -- let me stop and ask Mr. [REDACTED] if he
21 has -- first has any questions?

22 CWO [REDACTED] I do not at this point.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay.

24 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

25 Q. And, Mr. Hobbs, thank you again. Are you ready to push on?

1 We can go right into it, if you want to?

2 A. Let's continue.

3 Q. Okay, we'll continue. So, please walk us through what your
4 routine for the date the vessel accident caught fire? That would
5 be the 17th of February.

6 A. What I can recall, I was heading down to the boat, I walked
7 down to the dry store, freezer area and people were -- if I can
8 recall, they had all of their (indiscernible), fire extinguishers.
9 People were in the right place. It's hard to recall specific
10 images. Everything that morning was how it was supposed to be.

11 Q. Okay, so could you tell us, was there any -- do you hold any
12 company -- any type of safety meeting on the -- on that day, did
13 you have any type of a safety meeting?

14 A. No, I hold safety meetings on Wednesday at 11:30.

15 Q. Okay, so when you went on board the *Aleutian Falcon* on the
16 date of the fire, 02-17 -- so you went on board as a shipyard
17 competent person?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay, and did you perform any tests while on board?

20 A. Every time I walk on board, I always have my gas meter with
21 me. I do not recall any tests, no.

22 Q. Okay, so you had your gas meter with you, but you don't
23 recall any tests?

24 A. No.

25 Q. Okay, and did you take any pictures of the work area where

1 the work was supposed to be performed?

2 A. No, I did not take pictures?

3 Q. And I believe you said you weren't given any lists -- or
4 you're not given a list of -- or scope of work items for the
5 day -- no type of a list, correct?

6 A. I walked through the boat with the lead.

7 Q. Okay, you walked through with the lead. Let me back up a
8 second, did -- on that day, did the port engineer, Dustin Jones,
9 did he explain to you first what was going to be done on the boat?

10 A. I don't recall. I mean, we talked about it. (Indiscernible)
11 We talked with him every morning up until the day of the fire
12 about the continuation of that scope of work.

13 Q. But on that particular day, you don't remember if he talked
14 to you about the scope of work on the *Aleutian Falcon* for that
15 day?

16 A. I do not recall.

17 Q. Okay, then with the lead person, which would be the lead
18 welder, do you remember who that was?

19 A. Yes, Tony.

20 Q. Tony?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay, and do you know Tony's last name?

23 A. Morris.

24 Q. Okay, Tony Morris, yep, I've seen that now. And did you have
25 any questions for him about the scope of work?

1 A. I do not recall the exact conversation that went on.

2 Q. Okay, and how about any of the other welders on board, did
3 you have any conversations with them?

4 A. I do not recall.

5 Q. Okay, how about the fire watches, did you have any
6 conversations with them or any interface?

7 A. I do not recall.

8 Q. Okay, do you recall if they had adequate supplies to perform
9 their duties?

10 A. Yes, they did.

11 Q. Okay, and how did you determine that?

12 A. They had the fire hoses, and fire extinguishers, they had the
13 personnel, and they had plenty of fire blankets, and fire and ice
14 shield.

15 Q. Okay, so when you go aboard, and the lead welder tells you
16 where they're going to work, and you make sure that the fire
17 watches are there like you said, and they have their tools of the
18 trade so to speak, the fire hose and the extinguishers, do you
19 then actually look at their preparation before the hot work
20 commences?

21 A. Yeah.

22 Q. Okay, so the -- you -- so, after they put the fire blankets
23 out, and they use their fire and ice, and the surface prep is
24 completed if any grinding had to be done of the foam -- or removal
25 of foam, you're going to check all that to make sure that it's

1 correct before the hot work commences?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay, and does anything come to mind on that particular day
4 as far as the preparation, were there any concerns that you had?

5 A. No.

6 Q. Okay, and so the -- did you inspect the area after the fire
7 watches -- oh, I already asked you that, I'm sorry -- before it
8 began. Did you actually go on board the *Aleutian Falcon* while the
9 hot work was being performed?

10 A. It started after I got there. I'm trying to recall the
11 event. Yes, they were doing hot work once I left the boat.

12 Q. But you were there when the hot work commenced, is that
13 correct?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Yeah, okay, and do the fire watches check in with you after
16 the hot work is completed?

17 A. The fire watches check in with their lead on the boat.

18 Q. Okay, so please look at that -- I'm sorry, the -- let me
19 shift to another document and that's going to be called Nicholson
20 (ph.) Overall. It was used in Mr. Nicholson's interview, but if
21 Mr. [REDACTED] can show you that, this is the fire control and safety
22 plan for the FP, which I assume is fish processor *Aleutian Falcon*
23 and the date of this form should be at the very bottom. And I'm
24 just trying to make sure we've got it here identified. It says 21
25 September of '12 at the bottom block if you will. You see it says

1 fire control plan and then you see 21 September '12. Do you see
2 that?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay, I just want to make sure we're looking at the same one.
5 It should be, but I wanted to be doubly sure. So, if you will
6 please, on the third image plan view of the *Aleutian Falcon* is of
7 the bridge deck and you see an area that's circled in red. Do you
8 see that one area's bigger? There are two areas, but the bigger
9 area towards the top is circled in red, do you see that?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, great, and then now, look at the image below it, which
12 says sheltered deck. Do you see that?

13 A. Yeah, kind of.

14 Q. Well, the one is -- it says bridge deck and the image below
15 should be for the shelter deck, okay, which has freezer, chill
16 room, galley. Do you see that?

17 A. Yes, I do.

18 Q. Okay, great, and the area -- I want to compare this
19 zoom -- this Jones zoomed in the plans with the area of the
20 Exhibit 3. If you go back now and look at the marine chemist
21 certificate and in there on the marine chemist certificate at the
22 top -- towards the top it says walk-in refrigerator forward. Do
23 you see that?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay, I just want to make sure you would know and the port

1 engineer I'm sure will know the walk-in refrigerator forward, is
2 that the one we're talking about that says chill room and freezer
3 on this diagram? Is that the general vicinity when he says walk-
4 in refrigerator?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay, there's no other walk-in refrigerator forward on
7 this -- on the *Aleutian Falcon*?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay, I just, you know --

10 A. No.

11 Q. I've had my chiefs and managers ask me the same thing, is
12 this the same walk-in refrigerator. Okay, great. So, the -- now
13 let's -- if we can, we'll put that aside for a second -- the
14 marine chemist certificate and if Mr. [REDACTED] will show you Exhibit
15 4, which is called New Plans, okay? Now, this -- it says fire
16 cause on here and this is actually part of the ATF, Alcohol
17 Tobacco and Firearms', fire investigation, okay? And this is what
18 was -- according to ATF, what was presented to them by Mr. Jones.
19 Have you ever seen this plan before?

20 A. No, I have not.

21 Q. Okay, so I -- again, you know, I'm not -- I'm just trying
22 to -- you've been with them for a number of years and I understand
23 in the ATF report and what Mr. Jones has said that the space had
24 changed -- the layout of the space. Are you aware of that?

25 A. (Indiscernible).

1 Q. I'm sorry?

2 A. When did it --

3 MR. ALTENBRUN: You said it changed, since when? You need to
4 provide a time reference.

5 MR. KUCHARSKI: No, I don't know what the time reference is.

6 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

7 Q. So, that's what I'm asking you, Mr. Hobbs. Do you -- I
8 understand that they were combined to where instead of when we
9 look at the older plan where it shows a chill room and freezer,
10 that it became a combined space?

11 A. That knowledge would be the port engineer.

12 Q. The port engineer, okay, great. Yeah, I have no idea what it
13 is. I have -- we have pictures of a survey performed in 2014, we
14 have other beautiful pictures, but I don't think it was how it was
15 actually ended up. So, that's what I'm trying to wrap my arms
16 around. And the -- have you -- were you inside that
17 freezer -- or walk-in refrigerator on the date of the fire, were
18 you inside of it?

19 A. In the morning?

20 Q. Yes.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Yes, okay, and the forward bulkhead to it, right -- to the
23 freezer, was it -- do you remember how it was constructed?

24 A. I can't recall that.

25 Q. Do you know if it was made of wood?

1 A. I do not know. I can't even picture it at this moment.

2 Q. Okay, but you did -- you inspected that area prior to the hot
3 work being performed?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay, and how about the storeroom? According to this -- the
6 Nicholson Overall back down to the shelter deck view, which is the
7 fourth picture down where it shows the chill-room freezer and next
8 forward of that says dry storage. Do you see that?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Okay, did you go into that dry storeroom also?

11 A. Yes, I did.

12 Q. Okey-doke, and do you know if there -- did you see any fire
13 blankets up in the top of that bulkhead there?

14 A. I honestly cannot recall.

15 Q. Okay, fair enough. Do you know if any wood was removed from
16 the ceilings anywhere -- did you see any wood removed?

17 A. I do not recall.

18 Q. Okay, let me -- we're getting to the end of the more specific
19 questions. Were you aware that the deck was being inserted, that
20 they were cutting on the deck right above them?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Okay, do you know if the marine chemist was aware of that?

23 A. I do not -- I don't know.

24 Q. Okay, and do you feel that the -- now, looking back at the
25 marine chemist certificate, okay, do you feel that that adequately

1 covered the work that was being done for that day?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay, and the -- look at that marine certificate, the
4 limitations. It has -- they're numbered one, two -- on item
5 number two, do you see where it says may grind, weld, and cut with
6 cutoff reel to the weather deck above the walk-in refrigerator
7 forward without penetrating it. Do you see that?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. What does that mean to you?

10 A. I don't know what you're asking.

11 Q. So, you -- okay, you were aware that they were going to put
12 the insert -- that they were going to cut through the weather
13 deck, but it says that -- how would you cut through it without
14 penetrating it?

15 A. May grind, weld, and cut with cutoff wheel to weather deck
16 above and walk-in refrigerator without penetrating it.

17 Q. Yeah, so what would you not be penetrating?

18 A. I don't know.

19 Q. Okay, fair enough. Do -- would you like to take a short
20 break or do you want to continue? I'm guessing maybe 15 to 20
21 minutes more of questions, what would you like to do?

22 A. Let's take a short break.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. The time is now 1515, Eastern Daylight
24 Time, which would be about 1215 Pacific -- not Daylight, Standard
25 Time. Okay, we'll take a short break. Thank you.

1 (Off the record)

2 (On the record)

3 MR. KUCHARSKI: Now, I'll start the recording. Time is now
4 1533, which is about 12:33, Pacific Standard Time and we're
5 resuming the interview of Mr. John Hobbs.

6 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

7 Q. So, Mr. Hobbs, just some general questions now. Can you tell
8 us what is considered hot work?

9 A. Welding, cutting, grinding as we're cutting, and creating
10 spark -- fire.

11 Q. Okay, and something that creates spark or fire -- and is this
12 definition of hot work that you're using, that comes from OSHA
13 essentially, would that be correct?

14 A. Yeah.

15 Q. Okay, I just want to make sure that you weren't using any
16 other type of publications. So, it's OSHA that -- the definition
17 of OSHA's hot work, it would be the one we go with, correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay, and is cutting with a disk considered hot work?

20 A. What disk?

21 Q. A cutting disk, one that will cut through metal.

22 A. Like a cutoff wheel?

23 Q. Yes.

24 A. Yeah.

25 Q. Okay.

1 A. Yeah.

2 Q. What would you do if you saw the scope of work on a
3 particular day didn't match what was on the marine chemist
4 certificate if you felt it wasn't the right -- the certificate
5 didn't cover the scope of work, what would you do?

6 A. I would stop the work.

7 Q. Okay, would you notify anybody?

8 A. I would notify the engineer, the lead.

9 Q. Okay, so you have that authority to stop work, correct?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Okay, and have you ever found a time where you -- well, since
12 you've been an SCP and in your position, have you ever found a
13 discrepancy in the work to be performed in the scope of work and
14 what was on the actual marine chemist certificate?

15 A. No.

16 Q. Okay, and do you know if there was a fire detection -- an
17 alarm system on the *Aleutian Falcon* on the time of the fire?

18 A. That would better be a question for the engineer. (Verbatim)

19 Q. Okay.

20 A. I don't recall.

21 Q. Okay, that's fair enough. Since the accident occurred, have
22 any changes been made to your responsibilities after the accident?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay, and how about Trident's hot work procedures, have any
25 changes been made?

1 A. Not yet, no.

2 Q. Okay, and how about for notifying anyone about the scope of
3 hot work and any changes to the scope, has any of Trident's
4 policies changed since then?

5 A. No, we are still following out hot work policy at the moment.

6 Q. Okay.

7 A. The hot work policy.

8 Q. Okay, and has -- how about the -- notifying the marine
9 chemist if the scope of work changes, has that policy changed at
10 all?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Okay, did you attend any company or departmental safety
13 meetings after the *Aleutian Falcon* fire where the actual fire was
14 discussed?

15 A. Yes, we stood on the boat and had a discussion about it.

16 Q. Okay, but no -- there was a discussion on the boat, is that
17 correct?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Okay, how about in the office, was there any safety meeting
20 that was held regarding the fire on the *Aleutian Falcon*?

21 A. Yes, lots.

22 Q. Lots, okay, and was anything discussed as far as any changes
23 to be made?

24 A. No, I don't recall any changes.

25 Q. Okay, and these safety meetings, who -- or these meetings to

1 discuss the fire, who runs those meetings -- do you run those
2 meetings?

3 A. Martin Teachout and Rick Brown gave the meeting on the boat.

4 Q. Okay, can you talk more about the meeting on the boat, what
5 was discussed?

6 A. I can't recall the specifics of what was said that day.

7 Q. Okay, do you believe that the time that the fire work -- I'm
8 sorry, the fire watch has to remain in the hot work area after the
9 hot work has ended, do you think that's enough time in your
10 estimation?

11 A. We follow the law.

12 Q. Right, do you -- well, when you say the law, the OSHA
13 regulations, is that what you mean?

14 A. Tacoma Fire Department hot work policy.

15 Q. Okay, and do you -- so, do you know how long the -- do you
16 remember how the fire watch is supposed to remain after fire work
17 has stopped -- after hot work has stopped rather?

18 A. 30 minutes.

19 Q. Okay, do you think that's enough -- in your estimation, do
20 you think that's enough time?

21 A. Yeah, I don't know.

22 Q. Okay, no, I mean, sometimes, when we ask questions, people
23 that have been doing this for a while, you know, they -- some
24 actually make recommendations that we listen to and maybe look
25 into for changes. So, you don't have any opinion on that, okay.

1 And since the fire, did anyone besides people at Trident contact
2 you regarding the fire on the *Aleutian Falcon*?

3 A. Did anybody contact me?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. My wife.

6 Q. Okay, but that's it, nobody else contacted you about the fire
7 on the *Aleutian Falcon*?

8 A. No.

9 Q. No, okay. Do you have any pictures of the work area before
10 the fire? You know, like, the deck above the reefer or storeroom
11 area where the deck cut was made for the insert, do you have any
12 pictures of that area?

13 A. No, I do not.

14 Q. Okay, I'm sort of -- I have survey pictures from 2014. I
15 think that's the latest ones I have, so I'm trying to get a little
16 bit better picture. I have about 2,000 pictures after the fire
17 occurred, but not of that area. How about a picture of the reefer
18 box storeroom area before the fire?

19 A. No, I do not.

20 Q. Okay, if Mr. [REDACTED] will now -- we have a bunch of photos that
21 were taken by ATF after the fire, okay, and we'll start with
22 number six if Mr. [REDACTED] will show you that?

23 CWO [REDACTED] So, Mike, I've stapled them all together in a
24 packet.

25 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yeah.

1 CWO [REDACTED] And they should go in order.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay, is this Mr. [REDACTED] speaking?

3 CWO [REDACTED] Yeah, this is [REDACTED]

4 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. All right, [REDACTED]

5 CWO [REDACTED] So, the one that it starts with is -- it's an
6 overhead view from below deck looking up.

7 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

8 Q. Okay, and -- well, Mr. Hobbs, this actually is Exhibit 6 that
9 I have. You see it looks like a lot of steel -- charred steel,
10 some pipes, and you see a section that's been cut away, looking up
11 where you can see sky, yes? Do you see that?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay, this was labeled by ATF as storeroom. Does this look
14 like it's the size of that storeroom space?

15 A. I honestly couldn't tell you with looking at a charred
16 picture.

17 Q. Okay, yeah. I'm trying to wrap my arms around this. So, the
18 next picture shows, again -- similar, you're seeing the opening up
19 above, and pipes, and it looks like copper wires because they're
20 green, and then you see a light in the bottom -- like a little
21 spotlight -- orange spotlight in the bottom of the picture. Do
22 you see that?

23 A. Yep.

24 Q. Okay, does that give you any better indication of what we're
25 looking at?

- 1 A. No, it doesn't. Dustin would have a better knowledge of
2 this.
- 3 Q. Okay, sure.
- 4 A. He can walk you through it.
- 5 Q. I'll ask him the same thing so we can just skim through
6 these. How about the third one, it looks like you see a
7 pink -- this is actually Exhibit 8 and it has a pink -- it looks
8 like some kind of cord? Do you see that in it? It looks like a
9 charred area straight ahead and then a pipe towards the left side
10 of the picture, do you see that?
- 11 A. Yeah, that's -- yeah.
- 12 Q. That doesn't -- do you remember that --
- 13 A. Storeroom --
- 14 Q. Is that about the width of that storeroom?
- 15 A. I don't recall.
- 16 Q. Okay, no worries. Next picture is a ladder with it and then
17 it looks like that same charred area, but we're back a little bit
18 further and the ladder -- orange ladder, it's an extension ladder
19 that's going from the deck of the floor up to that open area that
20 you're seeing sunlight come in. Do you see that?
- 21 A. Yeah.
- 22 Q. Okay, again, is that -- this is Exhibit 9, does that jog
23 anything?
- 24 A. That's the staircase down into the storeroom.
- 25 Q. Okay, where would the staircase be?

1 A. Right there to the left.

2 Q. That orange ladder?

3 A. I don't know if it -- they are tore up.

4 MR. ALTENBRUN: For the record, he's pointing to something
5 further to the left. There's two what appear to be white
6 stanchions that would appear to be a staircase leading down. Do
7 you see that?

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Now, who's talking now?

9 MR. ALTENBRUN: It's Larry Altenbrun.

10 MR. KUCHARSKI: Who's talking now?

11 MR. ALTENBRUN: Larry.

12 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. No, I don't see that in that picture.

13 MR. ALTENBRUN: Okay, we must be looking at different
14 photographs.

15 MR. KUCHARSKI: Does it have an organ ladder in this -- in
16 that photograph?

17 MR. ALTENBRUN: Yes, it does.

18 MR. KUCHARSKI: It does, okay. There aren't many with an
19 orange ladder, I can tell you that, and it has a pinkish ribbon in
20 that also?

21 CWO [REDACTED] No, that was --

22 (Audio glitch)

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Oh, they're out of order then. Okay.

24 MR. ALTENBRUN: This is Larry. I just want to be clear for
25 the record that we appear to be looking at two completely

1 different photos.

2 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yes, I think so -- I think we are. Mine
3 labeled as 9 -- Exhibit 9 shows an orange extension ladder
4 and -- which goes from the deck to the cut in the deck, okay. So,
5 you're not seeing that in yours?

6 CWO [REDACTED] We have one photograph that would appear to show
7 that, but it looks like maybe it's from further back and we see a
8 lot of other stuff in that photo.

9 MR. KUCHARSKI: Yeah, there were two with -- there were two,
10 actually, with the ladder in it. So, okay, fair enough.

11 BY MR. KUCHARSKI:

12 Q. Let me move onto what I termed the freezer area and
13 it's -- since you don't have the pictures labeled as 10 or 11,
14 they're just stapled together, you're seeing a large area now with
15 charred sections to the left of the picture and it look like I-
16 beams on the -- an I-beam on the deck it there's a square -- it
17 looks like a charred metal area, it looks like a foundation or
18 something. Do you see that?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay, does -- ATF labeled this as the freezer area. Too hard
21 to tell anything in here?

22 A. I mean, that's right inside the door if that was the --

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. If it was back to normal, I'd walk in and turn left from the
25 outside door and the I-beams right there.

1 Q. Okay. Yep, and there's now a zoomed in of that same area, it
2 looks like a -- you can see the charred material on the left and
3 some from the overhead. But you see it looks like a big, round
4 steel pipe. I see big. Do you see that?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Okay, do you know what that steel pipe goes to?

7 A. I believe it is the crane pedestal.

8 Q. Oh, crane pedestal, okay. Yep, that makes sense, I remember
9 that now and -- okay. Moving on to the next one, which is Exhibit
10 12 -- the one we just looked at previously was 11. Now, 12 is
11 coming in even closer, it's labeled as one of those in the freezer
12 areas. Now, you see on the left-hand side, it looks like a handle
13 to maybe a mop or a broom or something and then you're seeing a
14 staircase it looks like with two rails on it.

15 A. Yep.

16 Q. Hand rails, if you will. And you're seeing a charred area,
17 and a pipe -- or insulation around a pipe towards the right -- a
18 little bit right of center. You're seeing also an organ extension
19 ladder towards the right side of the picture and that's going
20 vertically, if you will, from the deck up and again, a spotlight
21 just about dead center, but at the bottom of the picture. Do you
22 see that all?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay, great, and that walk down area, was that -- did that go
25 from the reefer box down to the forward part of the reefer box?

1 I'm just trying to figure out what that is because the plans that
2 we looked at before I don't think shows that?

3 A. I don't recall. I mean, like I said, Dustin is the --

4 Q. Okay, no worries, then. We'll skip Exhibit 13 and then we'll
5 finish with the last four of this line. Exhibit 14, which now
6 shows you it's from above, I believe it out on the weather deck
7 looking down into a space, okay. Do you see that?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay, and it looks like at the top of that picture there's a
10 fractured steel -- it looks like a beam. Do you see that?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay, that's just a benchmark; that's 14. Let's skip a
13 couple pictures -- so, skip 15, we'll skip -- look at 16. 16 now
14 is from above, looking down, there's a spotlight and that as we
15 look down, looks like it's on the deck, shining from right to left
16 in the picture. And more towards the top of the picture, you see
17 a plastic bucket and the bottom, left-hand corner of the picture
18 is a steel pipe. Do you see that all?

19 A. Yeah.

20 Q. Okay, now this -- I believe, but I want a confirmation -- if
21 you don't know, that's okay, if this is looking down into the
22 actual storeroom?

23 A. These would be better questions for Dustin.

24 Q. All right, no worries.

25 A. I can't remember with it being ten months since it happened.

1 Q. Yeah, no worries. I think the port engineer probably has a
2 handle on the structure stuff. And then the last one of that line
3 shows a steel structure -- rusted steel structure to the right-
4 hand side going from top to bottom. At the very bottom of that is
5 an opening, it looks like that's a bulkhead and then I see another
6 opening cut -- it looks like of the steel going down into the
7 ship. Do you see all that?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay, does -- is that another question best answered by the
10 port engineer?

11 A. Yeah, the structural stuff would be better answered by
12 Dustin.

13 Q. Yeah, okay. No worries what-so-ever. You know, I just hate
14 since we've got you here, and you know a lot more about that ship
15 than I did, to let the opportunity go by. So, let me wrap up a
16 couple things if you'll permit me. Is there anything you'd like
17 to add?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay, and do you have any thoughts on how to prevent an
20 accident like this from happening again?

21 A. We follow the rules.

22 Q. But no other --

23 A. I don't have any thoughts, no.

24 Q. Okay, and I've got to be brutally honest, I mean, I've had
25 people say yeah, I think we should do this or do that or

1 maybe -- you know, they're not in the regulations, per se, but to
2 prevent it. And we actually put those in our reports as maybe a
3 lesson learned or for guidance for other people -- you know other
4 operators to follow, or maybe to do to prevent things -- prevent
5 it from happening again. But you don't have anything to add on
6 that?

7 A. No, I answer to my -- I do what my supervisor tells me to do.

8 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. All right, well, great.

9 Those are all my questions, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] do you have any
10 additional questions?

11 CWO [REDACTED] I do.

12 BY CWO [REDACTED]

13 Q. So, you were saying that you walked the vessel every day, do
14 you take readings every day or is that assigned to somebody?

15 A. I will take readings for compliance basis, yes.

16 Q. So, just compliance basis, or --

17 A. Yeah, no, I'm sorry, anywhere there's a hot-work permit, I
18 have the readings of all the oxygen level, LEL levels.

19 Q. Okay, so you said gas meter just to be clear, is that four-
20 part, five-part gas meter?

21 A. I have a 4X and 5X brand.

22 Q. So, do you use both or just depending on the what the hot
23 work is?

24 A. Yeah, depending on the hot work, whether there's significant
25 dangers (indiscernible) I'll have my 5X with me.

1 Q. Can you just briefly explain what the difference between a 4
2 and a 5 is?

3 A. The 4X measures LEL, oxygen. The 5X has VOC's, it measures
4 vapor.

5 Q. So, that's the difference between the 4 and the 5?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. It has an extra sensor.

9 Q. Sure. Okay, thanks. And then does -- do you keep the
10 readings on board the vessel?

11 A. Yes, I keep the (indiscernible), same if they are doing hot
12 work.

13 Q. So, the readings -- so, just to kind of go back, for a hot
14 work check to maintain legal and to say -- maintain valid -- the
15 validity of it, you have to go and do this every 24 hours,
16 correct?

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. Okay, so those readings, are they kept with the hot work
19 check on the reader board, or is it kept on board the vessel, in
20 the office?

21 A. It is kept on board the vessel.

22 Q. Okay. All right, and they're no longer around?

23 A. No.

24 Q. All right, and I just have a question about the fire and ice,
25 I'm not really familiar with it. Is that an industry standard, or

1 is that Trident?

2 A. It's just another added precaution that we have taken
3 into -- they started with fire and ice (indiscernible). It's just
4 more security.

5 Q. Okay, so it's just another tool in the tool chest to use to
6 try to prevent a fire?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay, and then there was a talk from one of the fire watch,
9 his last name is Cole (ph.), that there was a small fire that day.
10 Are you reported -- do they report those to you?

11 A. They are supposed to.

12 Q. Do you have any recollection of that fire?

13 A. I do not have any recollection.

14 Q. So, would there -- how does that -- they just tell you and
15 you say okay, or is that documented and require --

16 A. It's not documented. I just check the area and the valve
17 line for the leading cause.

18 Q. Okay, and trying to -- so, in that scope of work, just what
19 you -- on that reefer chill box, it was going to be maybe one room
20 that -- can you --

21 A. I don't know.

22 Q. Okay, and was that -- so because it was a reefer chill box,
23 were the bulkheads lined with foam or --

24 A. (No audible response).

25 Q. Okay. All right, and then so if there was work in that,

1 what's the procedure to do hot work in a foam-lined area?

2 A. If there's foam, we're removing it 12 inches in an area
3 that's (indiscernible).

4 Q. Just 12 inches?

5 A. That's -- I mean, 12 or more.

6 Q. Okay. All right, and then who verifies that that's been
7 done?

8 A. The lead, and port engineer, and myself.

9 Q. And was there any foam that day or was it done previous, you
10 know, like two days before?

11 A. I don't recall that specifically. I mean, they prep -- like
12 a day or two of prep first, then welding starts.

13 Q. And the fire blankets -- you talk about soaking the fire
14 blankets, I've never seen that done before just in my experience,
15 is that a standard that you guys use?

16 A. We get out our fire blankets with the fire hose or
17 the -- yeah, fire hose.

18 Q. Does that -- that doesn't deteriorate anything through time
19 or -- if you know?

20 A. Not that I can --

21 CWO [REDACTED] All right, that's -- I think that's the few things
22 that I have. I am done.

23 MR. KUCHARSKI: Okay. Well, that then concludes our
24 interview. Thank you, Mr. Hobbs, much appreciated.

25 The time is 1603 on the East Coast and that'd be about 1303

1 on the West Coast and we'll stop the interview.

2 (Whereupon, at 4:03 p.m. EST, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

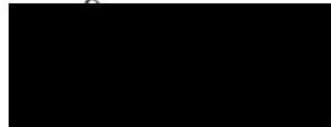
IN THE MATTER OF: *ALEUTIAN FALCON FIRE*
 IN TACOMA, WASHINGTON
 ON FEBRUARY 18, 2021
 Interview of John Hobbs

ACCIDENT NO.: DCA21FM016

PLACE: Via Microsoft Teams

DATE: December 2, 2021

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.



Carolyn Hanna
Transcriber